

A C C O U N T Of the Taking Part of a F L E E T

O F French Merchant-Men.

And bringing them into *Cows* in the *Isle of Wight*: With the Narrative of what the French Prisoners declare, touching the present Conjunction of Affairs.

Licensed January 30th 1691.

BY a Letter, of the 27th instant, from *West-Cows*, in the *Isle of Wight*, we have an Account, That the Afternoon before they discovered divers Sail making towards the Port, and for the present were in some Concern, lest it might be an Enemy, bending towards them, to make an Effort upon the Island; and thereupon they put themselves in a Posture of Defence: But they were soon after satisfied, by the Discovery they could make in the Colours of their Pendants, That they were Dutch and French, and that the former had them in Guard: Which when they came in it so appeared, That three Dutch Capers had taken and made Prize of twelve considerable French Merchant Men, laden with Wine, Brandy, and other Valuable Merchandice, which they took about the *Cape de Hage*. And give an Account, That they were near two hundred in number, having only three small French Men of War for their Convoy. And that, as they were returning with their Prize, they met some other Dutch Capers, and they acquainted them of this Fleet; as also three English Men of War, who forthwith stood after them, and it is verily believed, That they will come up with and take or force ashore most of this great Fleet.

The Prisoners declare, That there is a general Consternation all over the Maritime Coast of *France*; for by the Intelligence they have received from *England*, the English and Dutch Fleets will this Spring be sooner at Sea than ever they were before; and that they are apprehensive they will forthwith sail for the French Coast, and that one Squadron will block up the Port of *Brest*, while the other Burn and Destroy all along the Coast. And they add, That the French King is so sensible thereof, that he is sending a reinforcement into the Provinces of *Normandy* and *Provence*, and his Guards drive all the Boats and Barge-Men out of the River of *Sene*, towards *Brest*, to help to Man the Fleet, as if they were Herds of Beasts: And the King has sent an Order to all the Maritime Commanders of his Fleet, To Equip and get Manned their respective Ships by the tenth of *March*, or he will cashier them their Commands. But these Prisoners affirm, That it is as impossible for them to perfect it in a Month or six Weeks, as to build a Man of War in that Time.